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Rome, 28 February 2011 (Itar-Tass) — The chief of the Russian drug watchdog Viktor Ivanov arrived in the Italian capital to discuss the cooperation in the struggle against drug trafficking with Italian top officials.

Ivanov is to have negotiations with Italian Interior Minister Roberto Maroni. He is also to deliver a report in the Tuscany regional government in Florence. The report will be devoted to the joint efforts of the world community to ward off a drug threat coming from Afghanistan. Then Ivanov will meet with an Italian deputy of the European Parliament Pino Arlacchi to discuss the priority trends in the struggle against drug trafficking in Europe.

The negotiations will focus on the destruction of the drug production in Afghanistan, a source in the delegation headed by the chief of the Russian drug watchdog told Itar-Tass. "The unprecedented sweeping drug production in Afghanistan is the major factor for forming the drug sale market in Russia, where 548 tonnes of opium drugs are trafficked every year, as well as in the EU states, where 711 tonnes of similar drugs are brought annually. Therefore, it is very important for Russia and the European Union to pool their efforts to combat a drug threat coming from Afghanistan," the source said.

On March 2, Viktor Ivanov will give a press conference at the Russian Embassy in Rome. He will dwell on bilateral cooperation and the development of a Russian-EU action plan to destroy the drug production in Afghanistan.